

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTIA 00508 212103Z

22-12

ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 DHA-02 PM-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6721

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 0508

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS4

TAGS: SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE

1. SECRETARY OF CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE BISHOP CARLOS CAMUS TOLD EMBOFF JAN 21 THAT CHURCH'S BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT AS OF END OF DECEMBER 1975 GOC SECURITY FORCES WERE DETAINING ABOUT 20 PERSONS A DAY UNDER STATE OF SIEGE AUTHORITY. (IT WAS NOT EXPLICIT, BUT THIS FIGURE PROBABLY IS LIMITED TO DETENTIONS IN SANTIAGO AREA.) CAMUS SAID THAT MOST OF THOSE DETAINED ARE TORTURED DURING THE INITIAL INTERROGATION PHASE. MANY ARE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AFTER INTERROGATION, BUT OTHERS HAVE TO BE GIVEN MEDICAL TREATMENT BEFORE THEY CAN BE RELEASED OR TURNED OVER TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

2. CAMUS SAID THAT DECEMBER MEETING OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF CHURCH EXCOMMUNICATION OF PEOPLE IMPLICATED IN TORTURE. DECISION WAS TO CHECK FURTHER WITH CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN OTHER COUNTRIES BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO TAKE SUCH A VERY SERIOUS STEP. CAMUS SAID HOWEVER THAT THE BISHOPS ARE VERY CONCERNED WITH THIS PROBLEM, AND HE IMPLIED THAT SOME KIND OF CHURCH ACTION WOULD EVENTUALLY BE TAKEN.

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3. COMMENT: CAMUS IS GENERALLY CAUTIOUS IN HIS ESTIMATES

OF DETENTION RATE AND TORTURE STORIES. EMBASSY BELIEVES
HIS INFORMATION COMES BASICALLY FROM THE PEACE COMMITTEE,
OR AS IT IS CALLED NOW THE VICARIATE OF SOLIDARITY. SUCH
ESTIMATES SHOULD BE TREATED CAREFULLY, SINCE WE HAVE NO
DIRECT EVIDENCE EITHER OF NUMBER OF DETENTIONS OR OF TREAT-
MENT GIVEN TO DETAINEES, AND SINCE AS RESULT OF
GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN ON PEACE COMMITTEE AND OTHER CLERICS,
COMMENTS OF CHURCHMEN CONCERNED MAY WELL REFLECT ANTI-JUNTA
BIAS.
POPPER

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NNN

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